

What is claimed is:

1. A method of generating information regarding the quality of performance of a plurality of suppliers that each supply products to a vendor, said method comprising the steps of:

5 (a) gathering data regarding the quality of performance of the plurality of suppliers in a plurality of different computer databases;

(b) storing the gathered data from the plurality of different computer databases in a central controller;

(c) converting the stored data in the central controller into a single database;

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(d) utilizing the single database to generate information regarding the quality of performance of the plurality of suppliers.

2. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by
15 gathering data regarding the quality of performance of the plurality of suppliers in a plurality of different computer databases that are non-compatible.

3. The method defined in Claim 2 wherein said step (c) is performed by
converting the stored data in the central controller into a single compatible database.

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4. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by
gathering data regarding the quality of performance of the plurality of suppliers in real
time.

25 5. The method defined in Claim 4 wherein said step (b) is performed by
storing the gathered data from the plurality of different computer databases in a central
controller in near real time.

6. The method defined in Claim 5 wherein said step (c) is performed by converting the stored data in the central controller into a single database in near real time.

5 7. The method defined in Claim 6 wherein said step (d) is performed by utilizing the single database to generate information regarding the quality of performance of the plurality of suppliers in near real time.

8. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (d) is performed by
10 processing the stored data in the single database to create a series of quality metrics and using the series of quality metrics to judge the performance of one or more of the plurality of suppliers.

9. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (d) is performed by
15 generating the information on a global communication network.

10. The method defined in Claim 9 wherein said step (d) is performed by providing access to the information on the global communication network to each of the plurality of suppliers.

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11. The method defined in Claim 10 wherein said step (d) is performed by providing limited access to the information on the global communication network to each of the plurality of suppliers.

12. The method defined in Claim 11 wherein said step (a) is performed by
25 displaying the information on an internet web browser.

13. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (d) is performed by using a color-coding scheme to display the generated information.

14. The method defined in Claim 1 wherein said step (a) is performed by generating a non-conforming material report whenever a defective product is supplied to the vendor.

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15. The method defined in Claim 14 wherein said step (d) is performed by transmitting the non-conforming material report to the supplier.

16. The method defined in Claim 14 wherein said step (d) is performed by
10 requesting a corrective action report from the supplier whenever a non-conforming material report is generated.